



# Key Web Design Terms

## You Need to Know

Are you new to the world of web design and development? If so, there's a mind-boggling amount of terms and abbreviations that you'll be expected to know. To help stop any confusion and give you a quick start into the web world, we've compiled some of the most common web design terms.

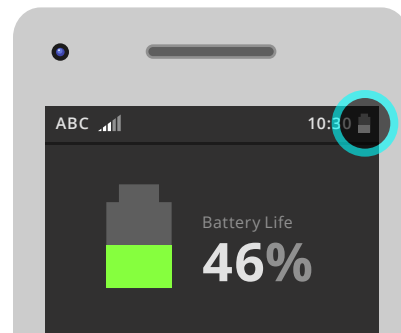
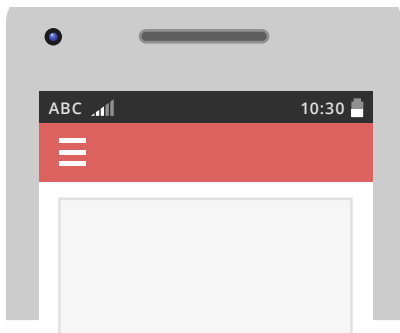


### User

As the name implies, the term "user" simply refers to anyone who will be using the site you're making. Some other industries might call it a "customer" or "client" but it's a good idea to start being consistent and only using the term "user" when referring to the, well, users on your site.

### Usability

If a website is hard to use, people will abandon it. You want your site to retain users, of course, so the term "usability" refers to how easy it is to use and navigate for an average person.



### User Interface (UI)

The user interface is simply how a user interacts with the design on a page. For example, the battery indicator on your smart phone is a part of the user interface. Sometimes UI is lumped with UX, which includes how the site looks, its response time, and its content.

### User Experience (UX or UXD)

User Experience, or User Experience Design, as it's sometimes called, focuses on the human interaction with the computer or device. For example, the action that happens if you were to tap the battery indicator on your phone is a part of the user experience. So while the UI is the design of something that your users will interact with, the UX is what will happen when the interaction actually takes place.

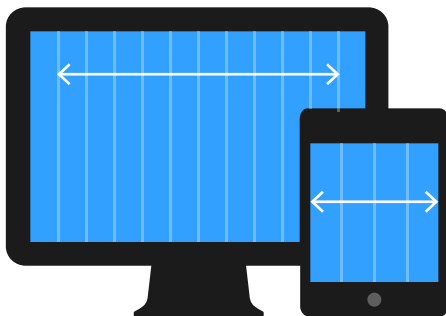
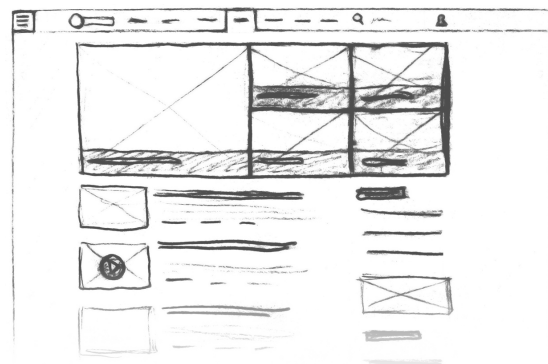


## Responsive Design

The term responsive design refers to a specific design technique in which your site will shift around by using grids and flexible images. The goal is so it'll rearrange itself depending on the screen size the user is using while still keeping a great user experience across all devices. This is often how a site will look different on your phone than on your computer.

## Wireframe

A wireframe is an outline used to plan a site's structure and functionality. It usually starts hand-drawn on paper and then created in grayscale in program like Photoshop or Illustrator without any design elements like color, photos or typography. Places where text content would be is also replaced with Lorem Ipsum (or dummy) text.



## Frameworks

A framework provides a foundation that developers can use to build programs and streamline the development process. They help you add extra functionality to your site without having to start from scratch or create a simple feature that could take you hours to write.

## HTML

Whether or not you're new to web design, you've probably heard the term "HTML". What you may not know is that HTML is an acronym that stands for HyperText Markup Language. HTML is a computer language used by your browser to display your site to the user. Since just about all websites are displayed in a browser, HTML is the backbone of any website.



## CSS

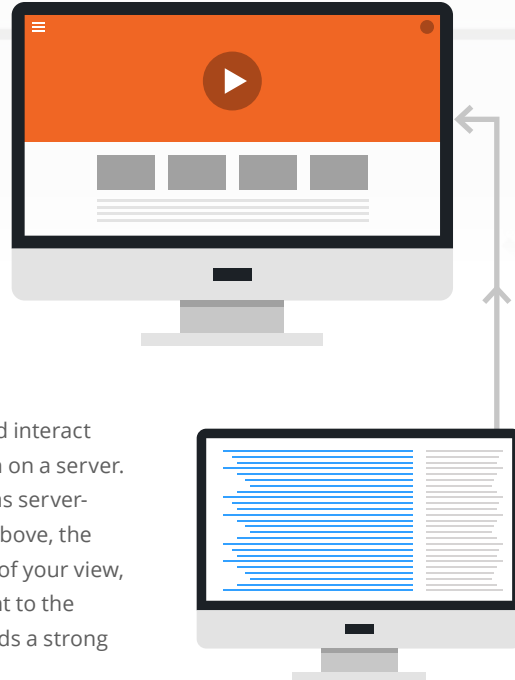
CSS is another abbreviation which stands for Cascading Style Sheets. CSS works hand-in-hand with HTML to create sites that are more than plain text. If HTML is the backbone, then CSS is the skin, the hair and the style of clothes. You'll use CSS to tell the browser things like what color your text should be and what fonts to display.





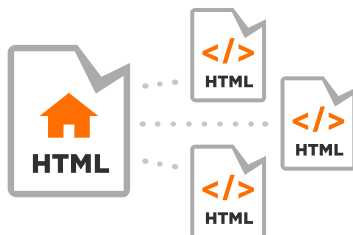
## Front-End

The front-end of a website refers to part of the site that your user interacts with directly. Coding languages like HTML and CSS are parts of the site that encompass the front-end because they're the languages that your user's browser reads. If you think of your website like a restaurant, the front-end is your server, the menus and the decorations, basically anything you, the customer, can see and interact with.



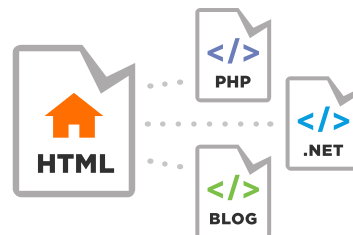
## Back-End

The back-end of a website is everything that the user can't see and interact with. Typically back-end coding languages like PHP or .NET are run on a server. For this reason, the back-end code is also sometimes referred to as server-side code. So if we're sticking with the restaurant example from above, the back-end is the kitchen and cooks. The kitchen and cooks are out of your view, but they're still there making the food and are obviously important to the functionality of the restaurant. Similarly, a functional website needs a strong back-end to interact with the front-end in order to be successful.



## Static

A static site is a simple site that doesn't need to change or update regularly. It's like a wedding or restaurant site that stays the same whether you've seen it on Monday or Friday. The information does not go to a database and isn't updated constantly. A static site simply a collection of HTML files hosted on one domain.



## Dynamic

A site that has information stored in a database, like user profiles and blog posts, and is updated regularly by not only an administrator, but also the users. The pages are created dynamically using a server-side scripting languages like PHP or .Net. Blogs, Facebook, online shopping sites and Digital-Tutors are examples of dynamic sites.



## Content Management System (CMS)

A CMS is a tool on the back-end that manages a website's content. A good CMS will separate the content from the design and functionality of the site so it will be easier for non-designers and non-developers to update site content. A great example of a CMS is WordPress.

## XML

XML is an abbreviation for Extensible Markup Language. XML uses a tag structure that's similar to HTML's, but XML tags define data, whereas HTML tags define the page layout.





## Accessibility



Accessibility refers to how usable a website is to people with disabilities like the visually impaired using screen readers, the hearing impaired unable to hear the sound from the site, and the color blind. It's especially important for sites providing information to those with disabilities, like healthcare or government sites, to make sure their site is accessible, but it's the responsibility of all web designers and developers to create with accessibility in mind.

## Bandwidth

Bandwidth can mean two different things. The first definition is that it is the rate of data allowed to be transferred from a web host during a billing period (usually per month) before overages are charged. The other definition is in relation to bits-per-second or other metric measurements. A lower bandwidth internet connection (like dial-up) means that the data will load slower than a high bandwidth connection (like fiber or cable).



## Browser

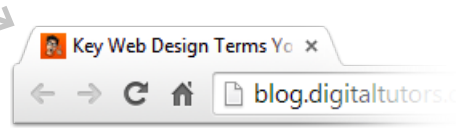
The program a user uses to view websites. Popular browsers are: Google Chrome, Safari, Firefox, Internet Explorer, and Opera

## Favicon

A favicon is a little customized icon, usually 16x16 pixels, that's often displayed in the web address bar next to the web address. This is also what shows up next to the title of the webpage on a bookmarks bar or on different tabs.

## GUI

Stands for Graphical User Interface and is usually pronounced "gooey." It's all the front-end stuff you see on a web app that makes it possible for the user to be able to interact with a web application.



So that's a look at some of the more common web design terms you'll see in the web world. If you want to dive in a little deeper and see how these terms can play together to make a functioning website, check out the course [Your First Day with HTML](#), [more web training](#) and use this as a handy reference guide.